



## **Riverside General Plan Program**

### **Economic Topic Group Meeting Friday, August 1, 2003**

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On Friday, August 1, 2003, City of Riverside Planning staff and the General Plan consultant team led by Cotton/Bridges/Associates and MIG held an Economic Topic Group meeting. Invitees included representatives from the Riverside Economic Development Commission (EDC), local and regional developers, lending institutions, and other economic interest groups.

#### **Attendees included:**

Rufus Barkely, Riverside Commercial Investors  
Chris Buydos, UCR Office of Economic Development  
Mark Hawkins, Riverside County Credit Union  
Ricki McManus, Riverside County Credit Union  
Steve Palmer, Panattoni Development  
Roger Prend, Albert A. Webb Associates

#### **City staff attendees included:**

Michael Beck, Assistant City Manager  
Sharon Cooley, Principal Management Analyst  
Ken Gutierrez, Planning Director  
Craig Aaron, Principal Planner  
Patricia Brenes, Associate Planner

#### **The consultant team included:**

Sam Gennawey, MIG  
Laura Stetson, Cotton/Bridges/Associates  
John Cook, Cotton/Bridges/Associates

The consultant team provided an overview of the General Plan Program and summarized the community visioning process conducted to date. Participants were asked to identify how to best pursue the City's vision relative to economic development in the context of the

Riverside Vision's five main themes. Participants were asked to particularly discuss potential impediments to and opportunities toward implementation of the Vision.

- A. How We Work
- B. How We Play
- C. How We Live
- D. How We Get Around
- E. How We Learn

The comments of the attendees are provided on the following pages.

### **How We Work**

TUMF and MSHCP fees raise development costs. Neither applies to neighboring San Bernardino County. With San Bernardino County land so close by, Riverside is at a competitive disadvantage.

The TUMF fee needs greater linkage to better development. The fee is overly simple and based merely on square footage. There is no incentive to do mixed-use, transit-oriented, or higher-density projects.

The City lacks enough developable land near freeways where major new mixed-use development could occur. The packing house area near the freeway intersection seems good candidate for redevelopment to accommodate such uses.

The RCTC parcel near SR-91 is a potential opportunity site.

The City needs to better utilize its greenfields and more intelligently recycle land to effectively encouraging its reuse.

Riverside is never going to attract certain people/businesses from beach communities, but it can focus on creating quality products and finding its niche there. It is remarkable that the city has 140,000 jobs but no major private sector employers. Most business consists of small businesses.

Encourage office development through General Plan policy and zoning regulations.

The City's economic development strategy is diffused. Look for target areas to apply such tools as:

- Mixed-use development
- Higher density housing
- Flexible parking standards
- Linkages to mass transit, with the incentive of reduced TUMF fees

Attract really good businesses to Hunter Park.

Ontario's convention center is a big draw.

The City needs a good inventory of land resources that can be used to market to and attract new businesses looking for sites.

### **How We Learn**

The quality of schools is a major concern and apparent deterrent to greater economic development. Riverside competes with Temecula and Rancho Cucamonga. There is concern and reluctance to bring families here.

We have missed opportunities to partner with the County. So many County agencies are headquartered in City. College students could form partnerships with County agencies in terms of employment, thereby encouraging students to stay in town.

Riverside has several great schools (e.g. the North High School IB program), and this fact is not advertised.

Tie education and work force development together.

### **How We Live**

Participants expressed concerns and complaints about the Proposition R and the RA-5 zone. The intent of these initiatives was not for commercial nurseries.

Riverside doesn't lack executive housing or an inability to build such housing here. Hot weather and air quality concerns seem to be main deterrents that keep higher level executives from moving here.

The Downtown Specific Plan is not grounded in the reality of the market. General Plan policy statements should not be wishes.

Improve the look of Riverside at the freeway off-ramps.

### **How We Play**

Downtown needs something to become more of an amenity.

Greater cultural opportunities will improve downtown.

### **How We Get Around**

Regional transportation improvements make it too easy to get to Orange and Los Angeles county jobs; there is no incentive to change the status quo.

Address at-grade railroad crossings.

**Other Comments**

The City needs more dynamic leaders; there is a lack of citywide vision among elected leaders. Citywide vision is needed to ensure that decisions take all of Riverside into account, not just the individual wards. The City Council gets rolled over on most big land use decisions.